



### **Emery County Project Water Supply Assured by Multi-benefit Blue Cut Exchange Documents Signing**



By Jeff Hearty  
Economist  
Upper Colorado Region

An important milestone was reached on September 12, 2013, as Bureau of Reclamation officials were joined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Emery Water Conservancy District, and Cottonwood Creek Consolidated Irrigation Company representatives to sign documents that will assure water supply for the Emery County Project and provide instream flows in Utah's San Rafael River. The San Rafael River is an important tributary to the Green River, and is home to



various species of fish considered to be threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

With the signing of the documents to bring about what has become known as the Blue Cut Exchange, our own Upper Colorado Regional Director Larry Walkoviak said, “The exchange benefits Reclamation, our project partners, and everyone with an interest in the Colorado River and its tributaries. By working together, we've been able to proactively address potential environmental issues that could arise due to a lack of high-quality surface water in the region.”

Once fully implemented, the exchange will conserve water, reduce irrigation operating costs, improve public safety, and reduce salinity in the Colorado River. The exchange will also benefit the Emery County Project water supply and San Rafael River fish and wildlife. Without the dedication of all of our partners, including the Regional Solicitor's Office, the Blue Cut Exchange Project would never have been possible.

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### 2013 Holloman Big Give



Since 2008, Holloman Air Force Base outside of Alamogordo, New Mexico, has hosted a three week program called “Holloman Big Give.” This is a competition where teams of Holloman AFB personnel compete for prize money donated by local businesses/organizations and Desert Sun Motors. The program was pioneered by Ms. Amanda Gallagher, 49<sup>th</sup> Force Support Squadron marketing director and now Big Give project director. She was inspired by TV shows like Extreme Home Makeover and Oprah’s Big Give. Each team comes up with projects they believe will benefit the community. The teams are judged on five categories: effort, enthusiasm, execution, individual and/or organizational impact, and administrative. In 2013 alone, Holloman





Big Give contributed \$282,000 in upgrades/savings to the community and 6,600 volunteer hours, with 26 teams and 448 participants.

This year's 6<sup>th</sup> annual Big Give competition had more teams participating than in the past. The three week contest aims "to change the lives of people in the Otero County communities in the most creative and dramatic ways," according to its mission statement. Large teams could win \$7,500.00 and small teams, \$2,500.00.

Bobby Granados of Reclamation's Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility in Alamogordo, New Mexico, participated in the "Holloman Big Give" in 2008 as an active duty military member. He enjoyed the project so much that he wanted to participate again. When he found out that retired military members were eligible to participate, Bobby decided to form a team consisting of his wife Theresa, Tony Lucero, and his daughter, Marina. Once the team was formed, they decided to find projects that focused more on a personal level, rather than taking on a project that required large amounts of manpower. Bobby inquired with different organizations within the city of Alamogordo asking if they knew of any projects needed. None of them filled his intent of doing something on a personal level. He then received a project idea from Ms. Gallagher that would involve doing some home maintenance repair for Ms. Dessie, an elderly widow. Bobby made a visit to the home and decided that the team would take on that project, but knew it would not take long to complete and hoped to find another project. A few days later, Bobby's mother in-law called and recommended a project assisting one of her neighbors, Ms. Rose. He went to visit her house. The outside looked very well kept with a very well maintained and decorated lawn. However, as Ms. Rose began to show him around to the back bedroom and bathroom, tears began to fill her eyes as she began to explain how for five years she has been collecting buckets of water from the leaks every time it rained. The bedroom no longer had any carpet and half the ceiling was gone because of the water damage over the years. The bathroom was in a similar condition, with half the ceiling gone and a large funnel being used to funnel water into the toilet so that it was one less leak she had to deal with.

At Ms. Dessie's house, the team painted the kitchen and living room, replaced a leaky bathtub faucet, replaced outlets and light switches, and replaced the countertops and sink. The second project extended past the Holloman Big Give time period, but the team ensured that the project was completed. At Ms. Rose's house, they repaired the leaky roof and removed moldy rotted sheetrock from the ceiling and walls in the bedroom and the ceiling in the bathroom. They also installed new insulation in the ceiling, new sheetrock, textured the walls and ceiling, painted the bedroom, and finally, were able to get carpet installed in two bedrooms and the hallway.



Below is the total cost of the projects and the amount saved:

**Cost - \$1,970.00**

**Saved - \$15,817.00**

Bobby's team won first place in the "Small Team" category and received the prize of \$2,500.00. They decided to use the money to purchase Christmas gifts for needy children at a local school, Sacramento Elementary.

Randy Shaw, Bobby's supervisor, "It was impressive to me the personal sacrifice of Bobby in participating in this program. After working a full day here, he would go home and start to work on the community projects. Not only did Bobby make a significant contribution in terms of his time and labor, but he made a considerable financial contribution to the projects as well. I can't say enough about how proud we are of Bobby and his team."

**Photos below**



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# United States Department of the Interior

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SEP 27 2013

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Reclamation Employees

From: Michael L. Connor  
Commissioner

Subject: Inspiring Colorado Colleagues

In the past couple of weeks, I have once again witnessed, read about, and received a firsthand account of actions by Bureau of Reclamation employees that serve as a valuable reminder of the courage, caliber, and professionalism of our workforce. Today, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for your contributions to our mission, as well as the support you provide your local community.

Almost two weeks ago, employees from the Eastern Colorado Area Office, Great Plains Region, and Denver Technical Service Center worked around the clock and under trying circumstances to do our part to help manage the incredible volume of floodwaters affecting Northern Colorado. Difficult operational decisions were made, as were actions that despite good judgment being exercised, could have put the health of individual employees at potential risk. These actions continue today as the assessment of our facilities and clean-up actions still pose many challenges. I greatly appreciate the ongoing commitment being demonstrated to help Colorado recover and I enjoyed taking time this week to personally thank some of our dedicated employees involved in this effort.

A different, but equally impressive commitment to neighbors and the greater good was demonstrated several weekends ago when two Denver office employees made split-second, crucial decisions that resulted in saving the lives of two five-year-old boys.

Daniel Bertram and Troy Steadman were enjoying a day with a friend at Cherry Creek Reservoir near Denver when they heard a mother screaming for help. The woman's son and his young friend were floating face down in the water. Daniel moved without hesitation, running to the boys and bringing both of them to shore.



Troy used his training as a CPR instructor with Reclamation and immediately started working on resuscitating the boys, also coaching another bystander to assist while Daniel contacted emergency personnel. Due to the heroic and immediate actions of Daniel and Troy, the boys regained consciousness at the beach and were transported to a nearby hospital. They were released from the hospital and are expected to fully recover.

I very much enjoyed being able to personally thank Daniel and Troy this week, for the courage and quick thinking that likely prevented a terrible tragedy. Based on my discussion with them, I would like to encourage all of you to take CPR classes offered periodically through Reclamation or your local Red Cross. While we hope to never need to apply our training in our daily endeavors, being prepared clearly saves lives.

Join me in congratulating all of our Colorado employees for their inspiring work and efforts. Their actions add to the many I have observed or heard of over the last four years, which serve as examples of why I am proud to serve with each of you as a part of the Reclamation family.

Thank you again for your dedication.





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## Thoughts from the Front Office

To those of you who were on furlough during the first weeks in October, WELCOME BACK. To those of you who held down the fort and continued to work during this time, THANK YOU for keeping the necessary work going during this difficult time.

Recently we all received via email an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Newsletter. The first article in this edition is one entitled, "Optimism is Good for Your Health." The article outlines recent research studies that indicate that individuals who have an optimistic view of life actually live longer. The article goes on to outline ten tips to increase optimism including noticing our negative self-talk, reframing how we define events, focusing on the here-and-now, focusing on what we can control, etc. I found it to be a helpful article and intend to use some of these tips myself.

In "reframing how we define events," I thought it might be helpful to look at the furlough as an example that had some positive aspects to it. Those of us who were furloughed got paid for the time off and had our good jobs to return to. Some of us were able to get done things that we normally couldn't do during the week or had been putting off because we were not working. So even though it was frustrating, it could be seen as having some positive aspects to it if you look at it from that perspective.

There are lots of things that happen to us that are outside of our control. I've written to you in the past about the negative focus on government employees as a whole and some of the frustrating things we are currently being subjected to—sequestration budget cuts, little or no awards, no cost of living adjustments for several years—the list goes on. It's pretty hard to find a silver lining in this. Maybe if we look hard, some of the positives are that we have good jobs, we have good benefits, we get to work with some great people, and do challenging work. We can also take pride, I believe, in our service to the American people. We should remember to appreciate one another and tell one another that regularly.

So I will start now—thank you for all of your service to Reclamation and the Upper Colorado Region. You are all essential to helping us get the work done and I hope you know that you are appreciated every day.

I encourage look at the [EAP article](#) and take the tips to heart. We've attached the newsletter again for your convenience. I believe there are some helpful ideas in there that, if we all practice them, will make us feel better and possibly live longer.

Ann

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### The Bear Facts



By Ann Demint  
Biologist  
Albuquerque Area Office

For most of us, seeing a bear would be a terrifying and exciting experience. However, for AAO Middle Rio Grande Biologist and Project Manager, Ann Demint, it has become a fairly commonplace experience. Ann lives with three dogs in the thickly forested East Mountain area of Bernalillo County, between Cedar Crest and Sandia Park.



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About ten years ago the first bear break-in took place. A large floor to ceiling window had been left open to allow in the cool night air. Suddenly at about 1:30 in the morning, there was a commotion and the dogs were barking. When Ann came in the room, she could just see something lying in the shadows on the floor underneath the window. Assuming it was a burglar, Ann approached. "The dogs had the intruder cornered. My blind Sheltie gave it a little nip. Just then the bear lunged into the moonlight and I realized that it was a bear." She very quickly took herself and her three dogs into a back room and the bear soon found its way out.

A similar incident happened recently, this time at about 10:30 at night. The bear crushed in the window screen, knocked over something in the house, and after being confronted by the dogs, fled with a bag of sunflower seeds that had been in the dining room waiting to go in the birdfeeder.

In yet another instance, while hiking one day near Sulphur Canyon in the Sandia Mountains with her three dogs, Ann came upon a mother bear and her two cubs. The cubs promptly ran up a tree, while the mother first charged, then chased one of the dogs, a Great Dane mix, around a bit while Ann gave chase. The bear soon headed back into the woods while Ann and the dogs headed off in another, bear-free, direction.

Ann has grown accustomed to sharing the woods with the local wildlife. While experts tell mountain residents to not store dog food, birdseed, or trash outside, Ann has learned that's not enough. She keeps the birdseed feeders and pet food in the cat's litter box room. She says, "Living in the mountains and seeing wildlife is a joy, but I prefer the wild turkeys and bear *tracks*. But seriously, you must always have respect for the bears' danger as well as their beauty. That will keep you safe and very importantly, keeps them safe too."

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## Open Season 2014

By Cameron Dolcourt  
Human Resources Specialist  
Upper Colorado Region

Open Season is upon us, beginning November 11, 2013 and ending December 09, 2013.

All changes during Open Season will be effective January 12, 2014. This Open Season applies to several benefits: Federal Employees' Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP), Federal Employees' Dental and Vision Plan (FEDVIP), and Flexible Savings Accounts (FSA).

It is also a good time to think about Thrift Savings Plans including the Roth option, and for those 50 years old and above, Thrift Savings Plan Catch-up contributions.

REMINDER: You must have been enrolled in FEHB for five continuous years prior to retirement, in order to carry your FEHB into retirement.

## The Affordable Care Act—"Obamacare"

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not change or affect the Federal Employees Health Benefits program. All plans within the FEHBP meet the requirements of the ACA.

For additional information, visit [OPM's website regarding the FEHB and Affordable Care Act](#)

## Health Insurance

Open Season allows employees to enroll in any health insurance plan open to them without the need for a qualifying life event. For information about the plans that are available, the coverage, and the premiums, visit <http://www.opm.gov/insure>. The website has all of the available plans and brochures, and it also features a comparison tool that provides a brief overview of how selected plans compare to each other. If you don't have web access or would like to see a printed brochure, talk with your administrative personnel or your assigned human resources representative.

There are a few new plans this year and plans have changed their coverage. Some plans increased in cost, others have decreased.





There are two free resources you may want to utilize as you investigate the various options. The Office of Personnel Management provides a tool to compare the plans side by side. This tool is located at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/search/plansearch.aspx>. Another option is PlanSmartChoice. PlanSmartChoice allows you to select options that are important to you and it will then rate the plans according to your criteria. This tool is located at <https://www.plansmartchoice.com/registration.aspx>. Though free, you will need to register. Registration allows you to save your options and come back later.

GSA will be holding an Open Season fair in the Regional Office, location, date, and time to be determined. Watch for flyers near the elevators. Area offices and field divisions may be holding their own, so check with your Administrative Officers.

If you are currently enrolled in a health plan and do not want to change, do nothing. Your enrollment will continue automatically. If you want to change your health plan, either visit <http://www.employeeexpress.gov> or complete an SF-2809 Health benefit Election Form and submit it to your administrative office by COB on Monday, December 9, 2013.

## **Dental and Vision Insurance**

The Federal Employees' Dental and Vision plan is an optional supplemental dental and vision plan. It provides additional dental or vision coverage beyond what is included in the health plan. When evaluating the health plan and dental and vision plans, consider what is covered, what is not covered, and what you anticipate your needs for the year will be. You do not need to select the same company for health insurance and for FEDVIP. For example, if you have Altius health benefit, you can still select GEHA for a supplemental dental plan. There are several new plans this year, and you may find that one fits your needs better than your existing plan. Additionally, you can enroll in a dental or vision plan and not be enrolled in a health benefit plan. The key is you must be eligible to participate in a health plan.

Please note that the Affordable Care Act does not extend the coverage age to 26 for either dental or vision plans.

If you are currently enrolled in a dental and/or vision and do not want to change, do nothing. Your enrollment will continue automatically. If you want to change your health plan, you must enroll online at <http://www.benefeds.com>

## **Flexible Spending Accounts**

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a tax-favored program offered by employers that allows their employees to pay for eligible out-of-pocket health care and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. By using pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible health care and dependent care expenses, an FSA gives you an immediate discount on these expenses that equals the taxes you would otherwise pay on that money.

**Note: The annual contribution limit has been decreased from \$5,000 to \$2,500.**

More information about FSA can be found at <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/summaryofbenefits.asp#WhatIsFSA>.



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**Critical: Enrollment in an FSA must be done each year—if you enrolled last year and wish to continue, you must re-enroll at <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>.**

## **Thrift Savings Plan and Catch-up contributions**

The annual contribution limit to the Thrift Savings Plan for 2013 will be \$17,500. So far, the limit has not changed. To reach the maximum, an employee must contribute \$673.08 per pay period. Once the annual limit is reached, no additional money can be contributed unless the employee is eligible for catch-up contributions. There is no longer a limit on the percentage of salary that you can contribute each pay period.

The TSP also has a Roth option. The Roth TSP enables you to invest after-tax dollars into an account, and the growth on that money is not taxed when it is withdrawn. For more information, visit <https://www.tsp.gov/whatsnew/roth/index.shtml>

To be eligible for catch-up contributions, two conditions must be met:

- 1) You must be 50 years old or older, or become 50 years old during this calendar year.
- 2) You must reach the maximum annual contribution to the TSP by the end of the year.

If both conditions are met, then up to an additional \$5,500 can be contributed.

Thrift Savings Plan elections (not catch-up contributions) continue unless changed. If you are already contributing to the TSP and want to keep the contribution the same, do nothing. If you would like to change your contributions, visit <http://www.employeeexpress.gov>, or complete TSP-1 and submit to your administrative office. You can select a percentage of your pay or a dollar amount.

Catch-up contributions must be elected each year, so if you participated last year and wish to do so again you must sign up again. You can do so by visiting <http://www.employeeexpress.gov>, or by completing TSP-1c and submitting it to your administrative office.

If you have questions about these benefits, please contact your administrative office or your assigned human resources assistant.

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### Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)



By Amee Baker  
Secretary, Resources Management Division  
Upper Colorado Region

It is that time of year again to get amped for the CFC charity drive. The CFC gives Federal, military, and postal employees the chance to donate via payroll deduction or by a cash donation to national and international charities. The CFC is the only authorized fundraising organization for Federal Government employees, so this is an amazing opportunity to support your role as a charitable contributor.

This year the CFC's goal is to reach \$3 million in contributions, right now they are at \$220,649. Each employee in the Upper Colorado Regional Office can help reach that goal. We can also win in one of several categories if we can get everyone to contribute; there is the highest percentage of participation, highest average gift, top giving agency, etc. Even if we can get everyone to donate just \$1 out of his or her paycheck each pay period to his or her favorite charity, we are that much closer to helping reach this charitable goal.

Charity books and CFC forms are located at Amee Baker's desk, please contact her if you'd like to receive a hard copy, and then complete and return them to Amee, UC-401, by mid-December. In addition, you can log into Employee Express at <https://www.employeeexpress.gov> and complete your pledge online for fast and easy convenience. Contributions will not be deducted until the first of next year.

If you would like more information about [CFC](#), please visit their website

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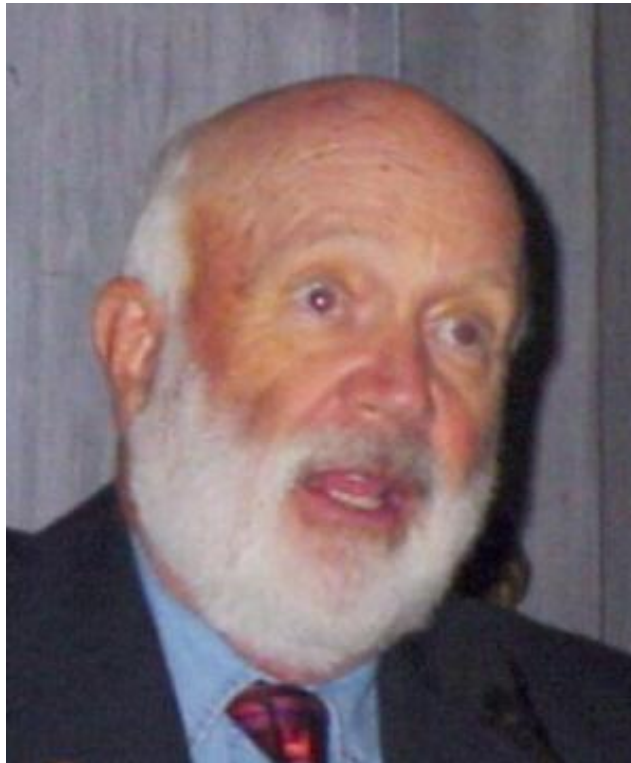




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### Oral History Spotlight

The UC Regional Library has a collection of 110 oral history interviews conducted by Historians, with various Reclamation employees throughout the years. The oral histories capture candid “in their own voice” memories of employees and their experiences working for Reclamation. The oral histories preserve information about Reclamation that would not normally appear in Reclamation’s official records. Contents of the oral histories range from the humorous to reflective of the situation at the time, and all are informative!



**Oral History Interview**  
**Roland Robison**  
Bureau of Reclamation  
1989-1993

Mr. Robison came to the Bureau of Reclamation by a rather circuitous route. He joined Reclamation in 1989 as Regional Director for the Upper Colorado Region. Prior to that he had been in the Department of Interior for 20 years serving as Deputy Director, and Utah State Director of BLM and as an attorney in the Solicitor’s Office where he served both in the Regional





Office of Salt Lake City and in the Washington Office. He was Associate Solicitor for Energy and Resources and in the 1970's served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Water both which he worked very closely and had responsibilities that related to the Bureau of Reclamation. What follows are excerpts from Ms. Bauer's oral history book:

### **Why Reclamation doesn't have its own lawyers**

"It used to be in the early days of the Bureau that the Bureau had its own lawyers but oh, ...it was decided to set up what amounted to an office of General Counsel in the Department of the Interior so that all of the lawyers representing all of the agencies would be in that office, the Solicitor's Office. And they would then not be on the payroll of the individual agencies and thus not beholden to those agencies, that was the theory, so that the advice they could give would be more independent than might otherwise be the case, and it would also serve better the interests of the Secretary himself. So since that time, there have been no lawyers working as lawyers per se in the various agencies. It is the Office of the Solicitor that provides that counsel."

### **Comments on proposals to move Reclamation out of Washington D.C.**

"I don't know exactly what everybody had in mind in connection with that. When the idea was first broached with, and while I was still in Washington with the BLM, I had some considerable problems with it because I just don't see how you can take an agency of the Government that is high profile, and of considerable concern to the Congress, and which spends a lot of money and has a lot of influence, and take it out of Washington scene and have it remain a major player."

"I expressed some doubt to some of my friends about the advisability of the move to the West because I think if an agency's going to survive and thrive and be a player on the scene that's got to be at the seat of the Government ... Washington D.C., where it can easily meet with the members of the Congress, where it can be a player within the Department of Interior. I've been around the Department long enough to know that there is competition among agencies in the Department. It's important to have the ear of the Secretary. It's important to have the Secretary know where you are and what you do and what you're about. And I think when you remove yourself from the main stage, you suffer as a consequence. But I was not a party to any of those discussions and I don't know all of the thinking that went on there."

To read the full interview of [Roland Robison](#) click here, or if you prefer a hard copy contact [Chantel Bouchard](#), Regional Office Library Coordinator.

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*Here is another reason why we might want to keep the zebra and quagga mussels out of our waters.*

## **Drink Up, Chicago! Zebra / Quagga Mussel Dumps Flavor in Your Tap Water**

Funny tasting water? Blame it on zebra mussel "nutrients."

**By Lorraine Swanson**



If you've noticed your Lake Michigan-tap water tasting and smelling like mildewed flip-flops or old sneakers lately, you're not alone.

Taste-and-odor complaints of local tap water generally increase in the late summer, due mainly to the rich zebra mussel nutrients being deposited on the bottom of Lake Michigan.





That's right, we're talking about zebra mussel feces. Its presence becomes more noticeable in August and September, due mainly to the annual die-off of benthic green algae.

The invasive zebra mussel made its first appearance in the Great Lakes in the mid-1980s, when transoceanic ships from the Black Sea emptied their ballasts into Lake St. Clair.

Ever since then, the rascally bivalve has adapted nicely to our freshwater lakes and rivers, consuming planktonic algae by the gallon, clogging up water filtration plants, and wreaking havoc on the ecosystem.

According to the **DuPage Water Commission:**

*"Decreases in planktonic algae have resulted in increased water clarity, allowing sunlight to penetrate deeper, stimulating the growth of aquatic plants and benthic (bottom-dwelling) algae."*

Zebra mussel nutrients on the lake bottom also stimulate the algae growth. The annual die-off of bottom dwelling algae in July returns high concentrations of "nutrients" in the water.

These "nutrients" produce compounds, adding that zippy earthy/musty flavor to our local tap water we've grown accustomed to in the late summer.

A female zebra mussel can release over 100,000 eggs per year. They don't have many natural predators in North America. Ducks and certain types of fish have been known to eat them, but not enough to kill the invasive species off.

Most municipalities, including the city of Chicago, add powdered activated carbon into the water to rid it of that old flip-flop taste and odor.

Until science figures out a way to get rid of this mussel from hell, we'll just have to put up with stinky tap water for a few weeks out of the year.

It's not toxic, but unless you can't get the image of zebra mussel feces out of your head, you may want to purchase some bottled water or a filter.

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# Retirement 101: Start Planning Now

By [Tammy Flanagan](#) National Institute of Transition Planning  
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This week, I had the pleasure of teaching a class for federal employees who have worked in government for less than five years to help them prepare for their retirement. This is when employees should learn about how their retirement benefits are designed to work.

My Uncle Steve, who I have mentioned in [past columns](#), was a federal employee covered by the Civil Service Retirement System. When he retired in 1978, the only planning he did was to complete his retirement application 30 days before his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was happily retired for 34-plus years with little preparation, other than spending the majority of his career in the federal government. Those were the good old days. Today, the majority of federal employees are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System, which requires them to coordinate three separate benefits: the FERS basic annuity, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan. The TSP is not a benefit that can wait until 30 days prior to retirement to attend to.

A number of the employees in my class weren't aware that they even had a basic retirement benefit in addition to Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan. It's also important for younger employees to understand that Social Security benefits are tilted to provide more replacement of income for lower wage earners and less for higher wage earners. This will impact the amount employees should save in their Thrift Savings Plan to offset this tilted benefit. It is almost as if the TSP and Social Security are on a seesaw.

For me, the classes that prepare employees for the future are among the most rewarding to teach. Hopefully, these employees are now able to set realistic retirement goals and make decisions about how much they will need to save to reach their goals.

## Basic Pay

One of the big questions that came up in this class was, "What is basic pay?" The definition of basic pay is important for federal employees to understand since it affects so many of their benefits. Your high-three average salary for your CSRS or FERS retirement is based on your basic pay. The value of Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance basic coverage and Option B (additional coverage) also are computed in your basic pay rate. Basic pay for the Thrift Savings Plan follows the same definition for the computation of automatic and matching contributions for FERS employees, as well as employee contributions when elected as a percentage of basic pay.

Here is the Office of Personnel Management's definition of [basic pay](#):

*"The rate of pay fixed by law or administrative action for the position to which an employee is appointed before deductions and including any special rate supplement under 5 CFR part 530, subpart C, or similar payment under other legal authority and any locality-based comparability payment under 5 CFR part 531, subpart F, or similar payment under other legal authority, but excluding additional pay of any other kind. For example, a rate of basic pay does not include additional pay such as cost-of-living allowances or post differentials under 5 U.S.C. 5941, night shift differentials under 5 U.S.C. 5343(f) or environmental differentials under 5 U.S.C. 5343(c)(4). (See the definition of rate of basic pay in 5 CFR 575.302.)"*

According to the [Defense Finance and Accounting Service](#), one of the government's major payroll centers, basic pay is determined by your [pay plan](#) and [locality pay](#). It is the rate before any additional pay or deductions are added. The federal pay scales include the Federal Wage System, General Schedule, Executive Schedule, Scientific and Professional, Senior Executive Service and Senior Level.

## What's Included



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Locality pay is determined by your official duty station, not where you live. If you get a job in a new area, your locality pay will change to your new duty station's rate. But if you go on temporary assignment, you will receive your current pay. Locality pay is included in basic pay.

Law enforcement officers in General Schedule grades 3 through 10 are entitled to worldwide special pay rates. Visit OPM's [Law Enforcement General Schedule Locality Pay Tables](#) for details. SES and senior-level law enforcement officers in eight geographic areas receive special pay adjustments of 4 percent, 8 percent and 16 percent. But when added to basic pay in the General Schedule, the law enforcement special pay adjustment may not exceed the Executive Schedule's Level IV rate. Law Enforcement Availability Pay, or [LEAP pay](#), is calculated for [criminal investigators](#), who work substantial amounts of unscheduled duty due to the nature of their job. LEAP pay is treated as basic pay.

For Federal Wage System employees, [night shift differential](#) is computed as a percentage of basic pay. This is the pay adjustment for work performed when the majority of a prevailing rate employee's regularly scheduled non-overtime hours fall between 3 p.m. and 8 a.m.

## Your Earnings Statement

Another way to determine what is included in basic pay is to multiply your gross salary on your leave and earnings statement by your CSRS or FERS retirement contribution percentage rate. If that amount equals the withholding for CSRS or FERS, then this would indicate that your full salary is all considered basic pay.

Here are two examples:

- Debbie, a CSRS employee has a biweekly salary of \$3,000. Her withholding for CSRS would be 7 percent of \$3,000, which equals \$210. If she received a cash award of \$200, the withholding for retirement would remain \$210 since the cash award is not basic pay.
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- Craig, a FERS employee has a biweekly salary of \$3,000. His withholding for FERS would be 0.8 percent of \$3,000, which equals \$24. If he has earned four hours of overtime during this pay period, his FERS withholding would still be \$24 since the overtime pay is not considered basic pay.
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So, there you have it. For CSRS and FERS retirement calculations, your high-three average pay is the highest average basic pay you earned during any three consecutive years of service -- generally your last three years on the job. For more information on basic pay and the CSRS and FERS retirement computation, see the [retirement services](#) section of OPM's website.

By Tammy Flanagan

<http://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/retirement-planning/2013/08/mystery-vanishing-service-credit/67946/>

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### Reclamation Trivia

Here's this week's set of questions:

1. Since \_\_\_\_\_, Holloman Air Force Base outside of Alamogordo, New Mexico, has hosted a three week program called "\_\_\_\_\_."
2. The invasive \_\_\_\_\_ made its first appearance in the Great Lakes in the \_\_\_\_\_, when transoceanic ships from the \_\_\_\_\_ emptied their ballasts into Lake St. Clair.
3. Prior to being a Regional Director for the Upper Colorado Region, Roland Robison had been in the Department of Interior for \_\_\_\_\_.

Last week, We asked,

1. U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle announced today a collaborative agreement for the Bureau of Reclamation to work with the Colorado River Basin Tribes Partnership (Ten Tribes Partnership) in a tribally-focused effort to address projected water supply and demand imbalances in the Colorado River Basin.
2. Who are Albuquerque Area Office's newest Professional Engineers? Nathan Holste, Jed Parker, Chi Bui
3. The Fontenelle Dam is located on the Green River 24 miles southeast of La Barge, Wyoming.

Last winner was – N/A

Please use this [link to send your answers](#). To be fair we will draw names from the winners and one person will receive a prize. We will reach into the prize bin for something suitable for the winner...as long as supplies last.

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### In Transition

#### Former Power Office Employee William Edward Gebhardt dies



Our beloved husband, stepfather, grandfather, great grandfather, brother, and friend William "Bill" Gebhardt passed away peacefully with his wife by his side Tuesday October 22, 2013 after a valiant battle with Alzheimer's.

William was born to the late Richard and Nora Gebhardt, May 1, 1929 in Forest Green, Mo. William Graduated from the University of Missouri with degrees in both Business Administration and Electrical Engineering. He relocated away from his family farm after he accepted a job with the Federal Government in the Bureau of Reclamation as a electrical engineer. He lived briefly in Burley, Id and Phoenix, Az until he accepted a permanent transfer to Salt Lake City, UT. He married the woman of his dreams, Gertrude Gregor in 1969. They shared a wonderful life and marriage for 44 years. After retiring in 1991 he spent most of his days serving as a member of Christ Lutheran Church, writing, carpentry, walking around his neighborhood, and caring for animals.

William is survived by his two brothers: Harley (Miriam) and Maurice (Wanda) Gebhardt, of Glasgow, Mo; Stepchildren: Cindy Russell and Steven Von Dehnert; Grandchildren: Jessica Neria-Salazar (Nicholas) and Christopher Neria (Jennifer); and great grandchild, Liam Salazar. Viewing will precede the funeral service at 10 am on Monday Oct. 28th at Christ Lutheran Church. The interment will be at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

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## **Former GP Region Employee John Elton Jack Canoy dies**

John Elton Canoy died on Aug. 29, 2013 surrounded by his children. He was born in Sidney, Mont. to John W. and Carrie L. (VanKleek) Canoy on Sept. 1, 1922. He attended schools in Nashua, Mont., Lebanon, Ore., and graduated in Albany, Ore. He joined the Army in 1942 and became a recruiter, supply officer and a cadet in the Army Air Corp.

He married Florence L. Lammon in San Francisco on Nov. 8, 1942. In Boise, Idaho, Elton worked for the Bureau of Reclamation, the Sixth U.S. Army X Corps., and as a Master Sergeant in the Army Reserves. He retired from the Bureau of Land Management after working in Vernal, Utah, Fairbanks, Alaska, and Elko, Nev.

He was a Mason, member of the American Legion, Elks, Eagles, Toastmasters, Master Gardeners, Bremerton Singles and Belfair Seniors.

He is survived by his son, John E. Canoy II (Oak Park, Ill.); daughter, Wendy L. Canoy (Grapeview, Wash.); and son, Kerry G. Canoy (Seattle); four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.



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### Sharing Our Diversity by Sharing Your Recipes

From the kitchen of **Rebecca Onchaga – Kenyan Pilau**

- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- Butter or oil
- 1 pound chicken (skinned drumsticks or cut up skinless boneless thighs)
- **2 tomatoes, chopped**
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 cup rice
- 3-4 cardamom seeds
- 1 3-inch stick cinnamon
- other vegetables or ingredients (I add hot peppers)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice



Sauté onions and garlic in 2 tablespoons butter or oil until onions are golden. Add meat and tomatoes and continue sautéing until the meat starts to lose its red color. Add 1 cup water and simmer 20 to 30 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients. The level of the liquid should be about 1 inch above the rice - add more water if necessary. Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally with a fork, until rice is tender and the mixture is still a little moist. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon oil, melted butter, or ghee over the top and place in a baking pan in a moderate oven (350- 375° F) until all moisture is absorbed.

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# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

October 2013  
Upper Colorado Region



## What Is the Media Saying About Reclamation This Week?

[Water Subsidies and Shortages in the American West](#)

[Glen Canyon Dam created clear river](#)

[Head of Middle Rio Grande irrigation district to retire after 36 years](#)

[invasive barnacles video](#)

[U.S., Mexico struggle to clean up Rio Grande](#)

[The United States of Drought](#)

[Places to hike, boat and fish at Glen Canyon](#)

[NM adds boat inspectors to keep invasive mussels out of state's reservoirs](#)

[Rio gets drink from Cochiti Dam](#)

[Applicants sought for Colorado River Citizens Forum](#)

[Feds begin Colorado River drought action](#)

[The implications of entering winter with mostly empty Elephant Butte](#)

[Economists: Powell Pipeline Too Costly For Kane Co. video](#)

[Future growth key in Taos water debate](#)

[New Mexico DGF Protects Waterways from Aquatic Invaders](#)

[Albuquerque District Hosts Bi-Annual Rio Grande Basin Meeting](#)

[NM steps up efforts to detect invasive mussels](#)

[Rio gets drink from Cochiti Dam](#)

[Applicants sought for Colorado River Citizens Forum](#)

[Steady Rains Finally Reducing Drought Footprint](#)

[Storms lift water levels at reservoirs \( \)](#)

[SRP sees positive movement from EPA on Navajo power plant](#)

[Reclamation collaborates with Colorado River Basin Tribes Partnership in focused water study](#)

[Coalville gets funding for treatment plant](#)

[Reduced releases from Lake Powell: no going back](#)

[Colo. cities seek Green River water transfer](#)

[An apology to the fish that saved Albuquerque](#)

[Udall Welcomes Bureau of Reclamation, Estes Park Partnership to Help Rebuild Flood-Damaged Transportation Infrastructure](#)

[After the Colorado flood: Big Thompson Canyon struck again by tragic flooding](#)

[Drought Spurs Native Farmers To Use Non-Traditional Irrigation Methods](#)

[East Canyon Dam video](#)

[Pat Johnston: Where's the water?](#)

[Upper Colorado Fish Recovery Program video](#)

[group of 10 tribes](#)

[10 ways a government shutdown would affect your daily life](#)

[EPA backs SRP plan to shutter generator at Navajo plant](#)

[New Mexico Flooding video](#)

[Colorado Flooding video](#)

[Celebrate the Colorado River During Colorado River Days Flagstaff](#)

[Water manager backs pipeline](#)

[Colorado floods will leave long-lasting impacts](#)

[Busting myths about water shortage](#)

[Mesa Verde offers free admittance Saturday](#)

[U.S. Access Board Issues Final Guidelines for Federal Outdoor Recreation Sites](#)



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[Colorado River cutthroat habitat resistance and resilience to climate change](#)

[After floods, Colorado's water full of filth and oil](#)

[Colorado Flood Recovery: Construction Crews Arrive for Massing Rebuilding Project](#)

[Editorial: Volunteers deserve praise after our flood](#)

[10 things to know before visiting New Mexico](#)

[El Paso groups learning to share](#)

[50th anniversary of JFK's visit to Salt Lake City](#)

[Cities go on water diets in face of prolonged drought, grim forecasts](#)

[Feds begin Colorado River drought action](#)

[Report connects decline in property values to projected drop in Colorado River level](#)

[EPA's Latest Proposal for Navajo Generating Station Cuts Emissions, Protects Health](#)

[Not-so-Clean Hydropower is Damming Us All](#)

[Thanks to @usbr - Salt Lake City for meeting with us today! #energy #powerplant #substation #fireprotection http://t.co/9xjkiO78va twitter](#)

[Floods have hit more than just Colorado, but will they fix the Southwest drought?](#)

[Baltimore Hydraulics wins contract for gate hoist rehab work at 10-MW Fontenelle hydropower plant](#)

[Flaming Gorge history delved into](#)

[Helena may miss brunt of storm, but rain should help Missouri River flows](#)

[COLORADO RIVER: Cities go on water diets in face of prolonged drought, grim forecasts](#)

[Fight against Green River Nuclear Plant boils down to water](#)

[Interior to Address Tribes Water Supply & Demand imbalances...](#)

[Colorado Hustles To Repair Flood Damaged Roads](#)

[Colorado's flood history led to changes](#)

[Feds fund tribes' water study](#)

[Colorado River Hydropower Faces a Dry Future](#)

[Rain fills Rio Grande, tributaries](#)

[Albuquerque water utility withdraws request for bigger transfer from Rio Grande](#)

[Never say too late for rain](#)

[Blue Castle Testifies On Viability of Green River Nuclear Power](#)

[Coalville gets funding for treatment plant](#)

[Storms pushed New Mexico out of 'extreme drought'](#)

[Trial for protest of water for Green River nuclear power plant ongoing this week](#)

[Nearly One In 10 U.S. Watersheds Is 'Stressed'; Demand For Water Outpacing Supply: CIRES Study](#)

[Parts of Arizona show decline in drought levels](#)

[New Mexico forced to share extra water](#)

[Parts of New Mexico now drought free](#)

[Colorado flood towns may come back less diverse](#)

[Weather Service: Storms filled some reservoirs, pushed New Mexico out of 'extreme drought'](#)

[Sherry Robinson: Fishing for good news in New Mexico's swollen rivers](#)

[Heavy rains brought relief to parts of New Mexico](#)

[Many Water Lessons Amid Tragedy from Colorado Floods](#)

[N.M., Colo. deluge both 'blessing' and curse for region  
Floods mean more water for Colo. ag next year, but just as many problems](#)

[Lake Powell Pipeline Battle Heats Up](#)

[Recharge rises as CO flooding recedes](#)

[Nebraska is Diverting Flood Water from Colorado](#)

[NM floods' wrath also left some drought relief](#)

[Recording-setting rain, NM floods' wrath also left some drought relief](#)

[Beyond the Arctic, Climate Change in New Mexico](#)

[The flood that wasn't](#)

[Stuff I wrote elsewhere: the flood that wasn't](#)

[Minnow many not be worth saving](#)

[Ghost Towns, Once Submerged, Rise Again As Waters Recede](#)

[Heart-Shaped River: Craig Childs finds his center in Canyonlands](#)

[Yuma Desalting Plant Could Boost US Water Supply To Mexico During The Drought  
GUEST COMMENTARY | Future of Colorado Tied to Water and Weather](#)

[Reclamation awards contract for Red Bluff Diversion Dam removal](#)



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[Interior to Address Tribes Water Supply & Demand imbalances with Colorado River Basin Tribes](#)  
[Utah's first proposed nuclear plant goes on trial](#)

[New dams aren't the way to address water needs](#)

[U.S. Celebrates Dam; Wintu Say It Is 'Scar That Will Never Heal'](#)

[Drought not over, says National Weather Service](#)

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